

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
St. Cloud VA Health Care System

75 YEARS VETERANS
HEALTH
ADMINISTRATION

A Legacy of Service. The Future of Care.

2020 Annual Report

St. Cloud VA Health Care System



February 2021

About Us

The St. Cloud VA Health Care System began serving Veterans in 1924 and now delivers care to approximately 39,000 Veterans per year. The Health Care System provides primary and subspecialty medical, urgent, specialty and mental health care; acute psychiatry services; and extended care and rehabilitation services. Specialty outpatient services offered include audiology, dental, endoscopy, ambulatory surgery, laboratory, orthopedics, optometry, podiatry, pulmonology, radiology, urology, otolaryngology, respiratory therapy, rheumatology, hematology/oncology, cardiology, neurology, nephrology, and women Veterans health care.

The Health Care System also provides a number of special emphasis services including residential and outpatient mental health and substance abuse programs, a mental health residential rehabilitation treatment program, outpatient programming for serious mental illness, homeless Veterans programs, a suicide prevention program, a transition and assistance program for returning Veterans, a women Veterans program, an incarcerated Veteran program, a Veterans justice outreach program, vocational rehabilitation, and supported employment programs. Extended care and rehabilitation services include skilled nursing care, home-based primary care, adult day health care, memory care, hospice and palliative care, ventilator care, and a variety of rehabilitation services including physical therapy, speech pathology and occupational therapy.

The Health Care System does not maintain an inpatient medical unit. Those needs are met by authorizing care at local community hospitals and transfers to the Minneapolis VA Health Care System 80 miles to the south. Veterans can access care and services at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center and three community clinics in Alexandria, Brainerd and Montevideo.

Our History

In March 1919, the largest federal hospital construction program in history (to date) was authorized by Congress to provide medical facilities for World War I Veterans. Public Act 194 of the 67th Congress, also referred to as the second Langley Bill, was approved by Congress on April 20, 1922 and called for an appropriation of \$17 million for the construction of twelve Veterans hospitals. A 500-bed neuropsychiatric hospital for Veterans Bureau District No. 10, which included the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana, was authorized as part of that law. In support of locating the hospital in St. Cloud, the St. Cloud Commercial Club staged a pledge drive and raised upwards of \$60,000 for the acquisition of 310 acres of farmland on the Sauk River. The property deeds were donated to the U.S. Veterans Bureau, and construction of the hospital began on July 17, 1923.

U.S. Veterans Bureau Hospital No. 101 at St. Cloud was officially dedicated on September 17, 1924. The St. Cloud facility was the first federal hospital for disabled Veterans to be constructed in the Veterans Bureau's tenth district. On September 24, 1924, the first patient was admitted. Thousands of Veterans from Minnesota received neuropsychiatric care at St. Cloud from 1924 to 1950. Since 1950 it has served thousands of American Veterans from modern-era wars.

The St. Cloud VA Hospital Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 21, 2012, because of its significance to the history and evolution of American medicine and Veterans care, its representation of World War I-era federal architecture, and its role in providing quality health care to World War I Veterans after the war. The St. Cloud VA Hospital Historic District continues to serve as a physical reminder of medical care provided by the federal government through the Veterans Bureau and the VA to Veterans.

Senior Leaders



Brent A. Thelen, PhD
Director



Scott Bartley, M.D
Chief of Staff



Breta Monroe,
Associate Director
of Patient Care
Services & Nurse
Executive



Cheryl
Thieschafer
Associate
Director

Leadership Message

2020 was certainly a very challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic required us to quickly shift how we do many things, in our personal and work lives. But, from the outset, the St. Cloud VA HCS team was prepared and responded to each new pandemic challenge. We stayed focused on making the safety of Veterans and staff our number one priority.

Much of Veterans' care shifted from in-person services to delivering care virtually using secure communication platforms, yet we adapted and stayed true to our core mission of providing the highest quality care for our Veterans.

Along with ensuring safe and high-quality care across all our facilities, several teammates traveled across Minnesota to help the community as this pandemic expanded. As part of this Federal Emergency Management Agency mission assignment, our employees provided support to community nursing homes with much needed staff, training and education, direct patient care, and more.

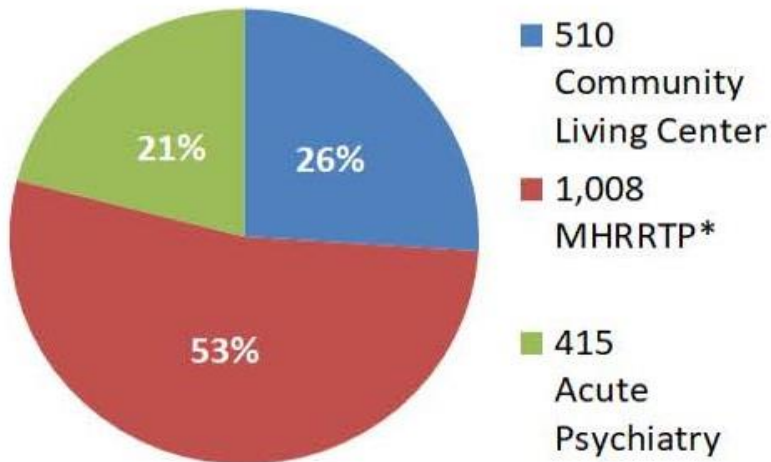
As 2020 ended, we were able to welcome two COVID-19 vaccines and begin the process of providing them to our Veterans and staff.

Through it all, we are proud to report the St. Cloud VA continues its journey to become a high-reliability organization, postured to pursue our true north goals of leading with safety, ensuring world class care, acting responsibly and for our employees to be engaged in caring for our Veterans and each other.

On behalf of the entire team, thank you for your service and for allowing us the honor of serving you.

At a Glance

1,933 Inpatient & Residential Unique Patients Treated



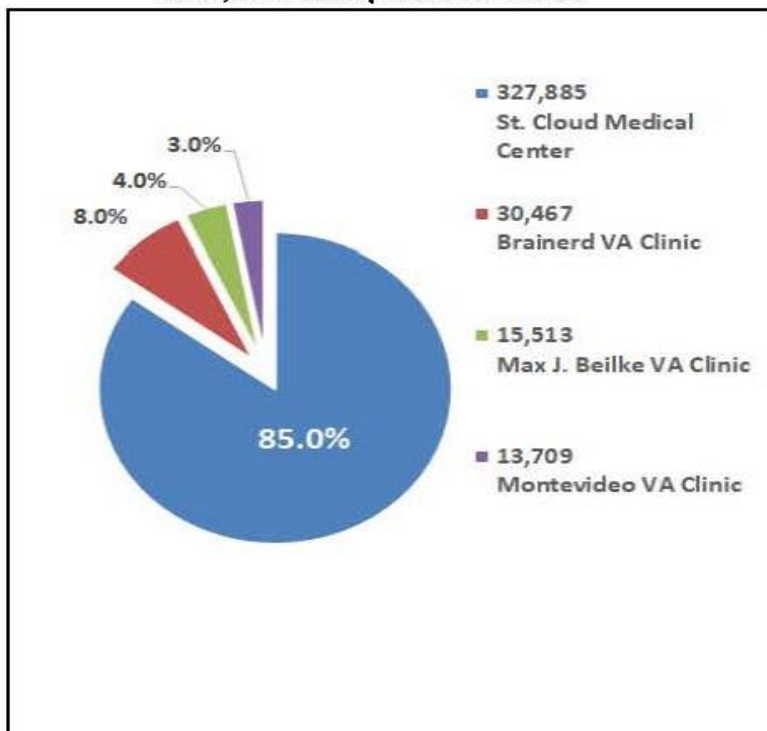
**Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation & Treatment Program*

37,544 Unique Veterans Treated

104,277 Bed Days of Care

285 Average Daily Census

387,580 Outpatient Visits



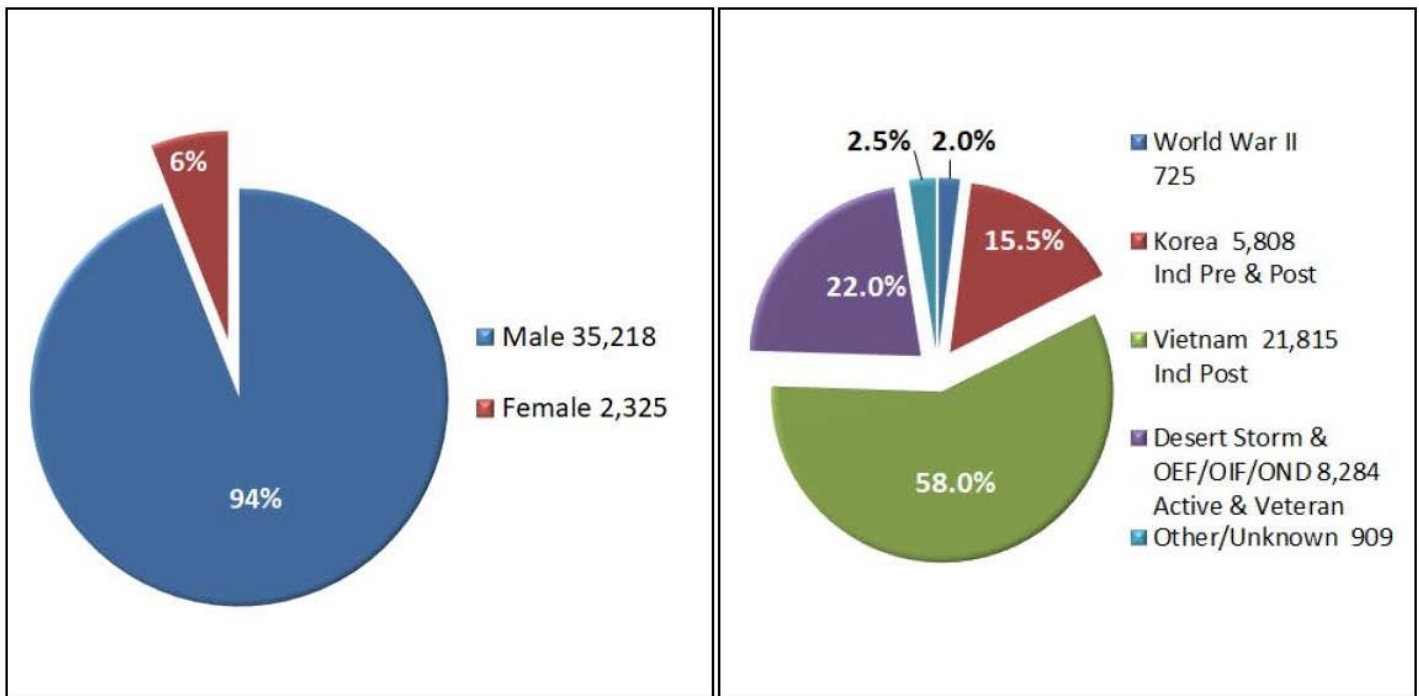
20 Veteran Service Organizations

557 Volunteers

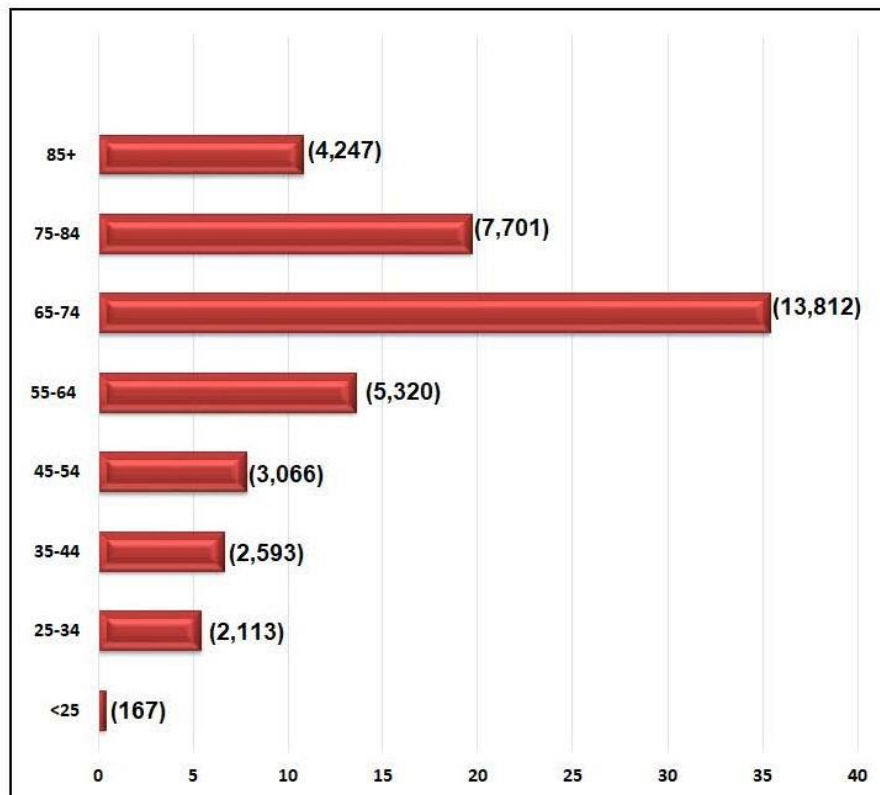
1,900 Employees*

**Includes full and part-time employees*

Who We Serve

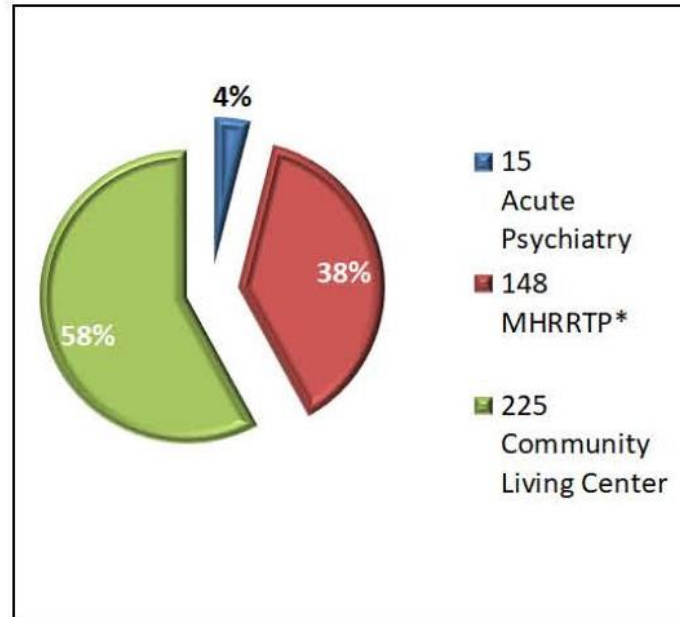


Unique Veterans by Age



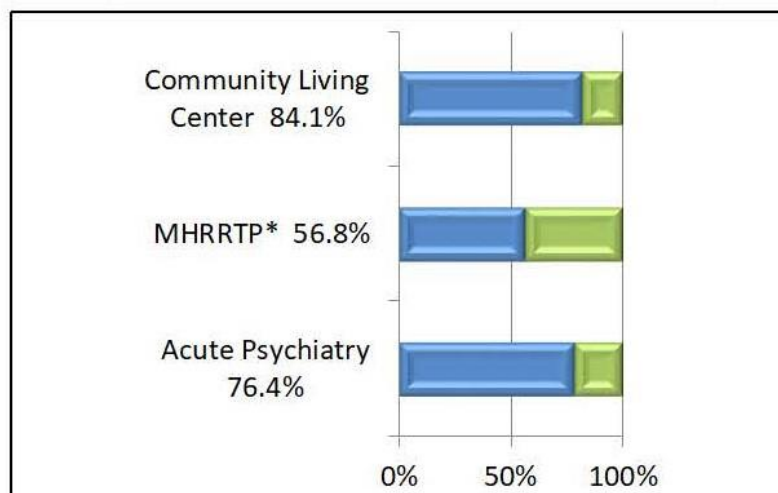
Operating Statistics, FY 2020

Operating Beds



**Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program*

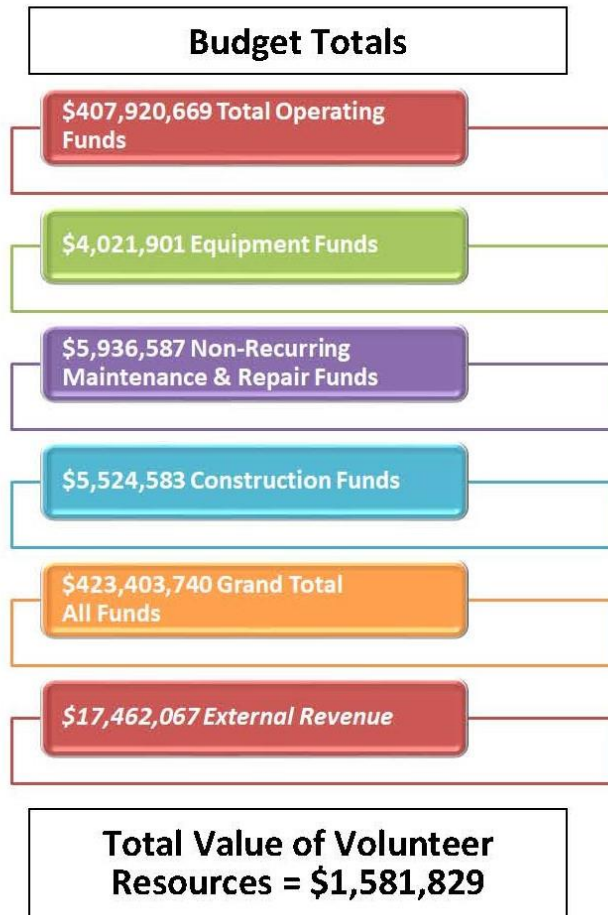
Bed Occupancy Rates



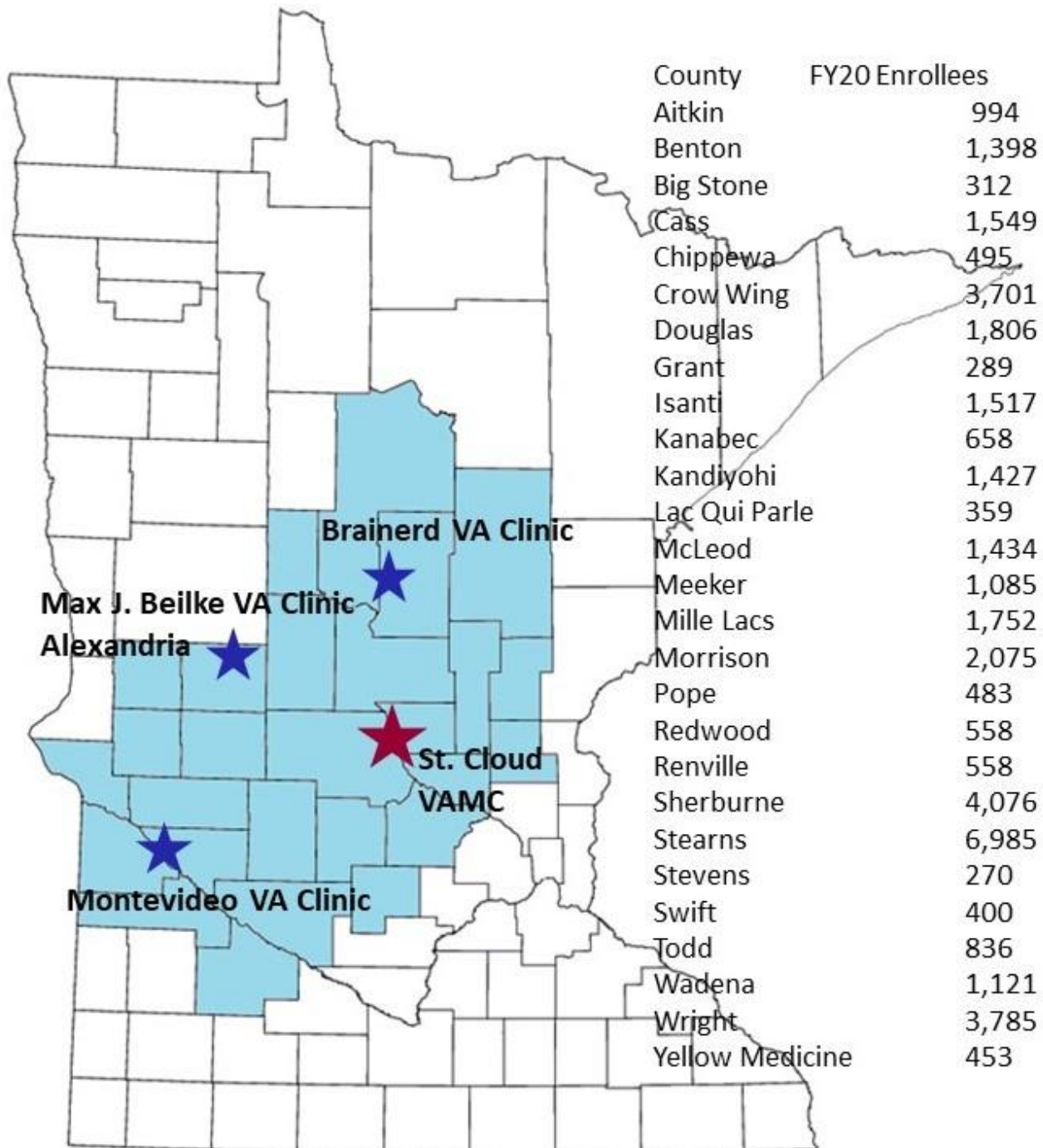
**Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation & Treatment Program*

**Overall Bed Occupancy Rate:
73.4%**

Operating Statistics, FY 2020, cont.



Operating Locations & Enrollees by County



The St. Cloud VA HCS is assigned a primary service area of 27 central Minnesota counties. With a Veteran population of totaling approximately 69,000 total Veterans, over 40,000 of these Veterans are enrolled in VA health care, a number significantly surpassing the rest of the nation.

Distinguished Civil Servants



***Physician's Award for
Clinical Excellence***
Erik Vilen, MD,
Primary Care



***Excellence in Nursing:
Licensed Practical Nurse***
Christine Carlson,
Extended Care & Rehabilitation



***Clinical Employee of
the Year***
Erin McGlynn,
Imaging



***Excellence in Nursing:
Expanded Role***
Annamarie Toner, RN
Extended Care & Rehabilitation



***Excellence in Nursing:
Registered Nurse***
Amy Brand, RN
Surgical & Specialty Care



Administrative Excellence:
Lois Schofield,
Pharmacy



***Administrative Employee of
the Year:***
Michelle Frisk,
Education



Clinical Excellence
Oluvwakemi "Kemi" Rufai, LPN
Extended Care & Rehabilitation



***Excellence in Nursing:
Nursing Assistant***
Fay Gunderson, NA
Extended Care & Rehabilitation



2019 Employees of the Month

Clinical

Sandra Janssen, Diagnostic Radiologic Tech (MRI), Imaging

Jessica Sand, RN, Primary Care

Kristin Kvaal, Social Worker, Mental Health

Michelle Kuhlmann, Occupational Therapist, Extended Care

BreeAnna Cooney, RN, Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Judy Vossen, Nursing Assistant, Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Samuel Barlue, RN, Extended Care and Rehabilitation

Carolyn Ramirez, MSW, LICSW, Mental Health

Sarah Anderson Krantz, Social Worker, Primary Specialty Medicine / Home Based Primary Care

Emily Luitjens, NP, Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Amy Schulte, RN, Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Kelly Richards, LPN, Mental Health

Administrative

JoAnn Koch, Medical Clerk, Imaging

Craig Jordahl, Food Service Worker, Nutrition and Food Service

Alicia Wawack, Advanced MSA, Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Jason Gangl, Advanced Medical Support Assistant, Mental Health

Breeze Hennes, Education/Training Specialist

Julie Schrom, Administrative Dietetic Technician

Sara Brodeen, Medical Support Assistant, PSM

Kristi Bemboom, Medical Support Assistant, Urgent Care

Pam Thorton, Imaging Secretary, Diagnostic Radiology

Kristopher Oster, Biomedical Engineer, Biomed

Mary Braden, Medical Support Assistant, PSM/Brainerd CBOC

Jessica Lelou, Supervisory Medical Support Assistant Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Clinical Organization & Service Offerings

Primary & Specialty Medicine



Richard Linares, M.D.
Acting Director

- Preventative Health & Chronic Disease Management
- Telephone Care
- Clinical Pharmacy
- Rheumatology Clinic
- Neurology
- Pulmonology
- Retinal Scanning
- Nephrology
- Compensation & Pension Exams
- Cardiology-Environmental Exams
- Women's Health Services
- Urgent Care
- Hematology/Oncology Clinic
- Shared Medical Appointments
- Respiratory Therapy Services
- Home Telehealth
- Social Work Services

Surgical & Specialty Care



Amber Scharnweber, M.D.
Acting Director

- Outpatient Surgery
- Optometry
- Dental
- Otolaryngology
- Oral Surgery
- GI/Endoscopy
- Plastic Surgery (limited)
- Orthopedics
- Audiology
- Ophthalmology
- Urology
- General Surgery
- Podiatry
- Colonoscopies
- Wound Care
- Endodontics

Mental Health



Jeremy Maurstad, MSSA, LICSW, FACHE
Director

- Outpatient Mental Health Treatment
- Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program
- Substance Use Treatment
- Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Treatment
- Mental Health Intensive Case Management
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Recovery Program
- Primary Care Mental Health Integration Program
- Veterans Justice Program
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Track
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Psychological Testing & Assessment
- Suicide Prevention Program
- Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program

Extended Care & Rehabilitation



Christopher Churchill, D.O.
Director

- Home Care Telehealth
- Dementia Care
- Hospice Care
- Nursing Home Care
- Respite Care
- Pastoral Care/Counseling
- Rehabilitation Therapies
- Home Improvement Structural Alteration
- Secondary Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Evaluation
- Adult Day Health Care
- Home Based Primary Care
- Gero-Psychiatry
- Ventilator Dependent Care
- Prosthetics Services
- Fitness and Wellness

Special Programs for Veterans

Post 911 Transition and Care Management Program

Kristin Kvaal, Program Manager, 320-252-1670, Ext. 6546

Website: <http://www.stcloud.va.gov/freedom.asp>

Suicide Prevention Coordinators

Ann Fleming, 320-252-1670, Ext. 7925

Jinae Plumhoff, 320-252-1670, Ext. 6719

Patient Advocates

Karen Harrison, Heather Helmin & Jessica Pappenfus 320-255-6353

Homeless Program Manager

Dr. Nicole Hofman-Wilke, 320-252-1670, Ext. 6899

Veterans Justice Programs

Mike Mynczywor, 320-252-1670, Ext. 7205

Military Sexual Trauma/Intimate Partner Violence Program Manager

Joy Finkelson, 320-252-1670, Ext. 6398

Caregiver Support Program

Jessica Behrends, Program Manager 320-252-1670, Ext. 7283

Women Veterans Program Manager

Amber Willert, 320-252-1670, Ext. 6655

Polytrauma Support Clinic Manager

Michelle Wright, 320-252-1670, Ext. 7235

Vision Impairment Services Team Coordinator

Lois Thesing, 320-252-1670, Ext. 7235

Spinal Cord Injury & Disorders Program Manager

Heidi Ampe, 320-252-1670, Ext. 7235

Former Prisoners of War Advocate

Christine Dawson, 320-252-1670, Ext. 7300

LGBTQ Veterans Care Coordinators

Joy Beach, 320-252-1670, Ext. 6660

Stephany Himrich, 320-252-1670, Ext. 7298

2020 Accreditation

An important sign of quality in health care is being approved by respected agencies. Accreditation is a process where standards are set, and health care providers are reviewed to make sure they are meeting those standards. Accrediting agencies review medical centers by interviewing patients and staff and observing the environment. There are many accrediting agencies that review VA medical centers. St. Cloud VA HCS is accredited in the following areas from the following agencies:

Agency: The Joint Commission

Services Surveyed: Hospital, Behavioral Health Care, Home Care

Survey Outcome: Three-Year Accreditation, expires November 2022

Joint Commission accreditation is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality and signals an organization's commitment to improving safety and quality of care. A culture of continuous improvement is fostered through ongoing monitoring and measuring.

Agency: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Services Surveyed: Mental Health Rehabilitation and Recovery Services

Survey Outcome: Three-Year Accreditation, expires April 2021

Agency: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Services Surveyed: Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program

Survey Outcome: Three-Year Accreditation, expires April 2021

Agency: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Services Surveyed: Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs which includes Behavioral Health and Residential Treatment

Survey Outcome: Three-Year Accreditation, expires January 2022

Agency: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Services Surveyed: Mental Health Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center

Survey Outcome: Three-Year Accreditation, expires January 2022

CARF is a nonprofit organization that accredits human service providers, and CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate compliance with internationally recognized standards and a focus on consumer satisfaction.



A Legacy of Service. The Future of Care.

- Over the last 75 years, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has evolved to meet the unique challenges and care needs of Veterans from every era and at every stage of their lives.
- From the founding of the Department of Medicine and Surgery (DM&S) in 1946 and onward, VHA has been at the forefront of health care innovation, improving not only the lives of Veterans but the health of the nation as well.
- Many of the innovations of the post-WWII era are still major elements of the care and services VHA provides to Veterans today.
- VHA is committed to continuing to evolve and improve the quality, safety, and array of services available to Veterans and to contribute to improving the health and wellness of all Americans.

All Veterans are encouraged to enroll in the VA Health Care System. If not currently enrolled, Veterans can complete the *Application for Health Care Benefits* (Form 1010EZ) online at:

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/>